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FM AMCONSUL SURABAYA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0415  
INFO RUEHJS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0193  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 0402  
RUEHJS/AMCONSUL SURABAYA 0424  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0062

UNCLAS SURABAYA 000052

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS, G/TIP, DRL/ILCSR, INR  
BANGKOK FOR INL REFUGEE OFFICE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [SMIG](#) [PREL](#) [ELAB](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [ID](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: EAST JAVA: AFGHANS BREAK OUT OF IMMIGRATION DETENTION,  
PRESUMED BOUND FOR AUSTRALIA

REF: A. 2008 SURABAYA 68

[B](#). B JAKARTA 182

This message is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

[1](#). (SBU) Ten Afghan men are still at large after escaping from an East Java immigration detention center in the early hours of May 19. Indonesian immigration officers say the fugitives broke through a barred window and escaped leaving behind an ill compatriot and seven Iraqis. Indonesian immigration officers assume the escapees had assistance from smugglers and are making their way to Australia. Authorities continue to scour nearby tourist areas, which might allow the fugitives to blend in, but have no leads. There has been ample evidence of human smuggling via islands farther east in the Indonesian archipelago (reftel A), but this is the first arrest of such a group transiting East Java overland.

[2](#). (SBU) Malang Immigration Officials told ConGen Surabaya that the 11 Afghans had no travel documents when they were captured in the small East Java city of Probolinggo, roughly 40 miles east of Surabaya. However, three of the Iraqis had valid passports and Indonesian visas; four of Iraqis were holding travel documents from the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). Officials were unsure when the Iraqis would be released or charged with immigration violations.

[3](#). (SBU) After cyclone season, June's calmer seas offer boats a window of opportunity for safer passage between West Timor and Australia. Australian National Police advised Congen Surabaya that increased surveillance and cooperation between Australian and Indonesian police has made successful illegal entry almost impossible by this route (reftel A). While the number of attempts is unknown, this routing has already claimed lives. In January 2009, local media reported that authorities in Kupang, West Timor, had recaptured 13 of 18 illegal immigrants (citizens of Afghanistan, Burma and Pakistan) who had earlier escaped from immigration detention. Three were found dead by local fishermen -- drowned in an attempt to reach Australia on an 11-meter fishing boat. The island of Sulawesi has also been a transit point for illegal immigrants transiting Indonesia and bound for Australia. (reftel B).

MCCLELLAND